

# 20 Tips for Safe Lift Truck Operation

To help ensure safe lift truck operation, we have compiled 20 top tips.

This is for quick reference only. For detailed information regarding forklift safety and onsite support and training to ensure compliance with evolving health and safety regulations, contact your local Hyster distribution partner.

## 1. Qualified Operators Only

- Only those individuals who are properly trained, authorised and licensed may operate materials handling equipment.

## 2. Wear the Correct Clothing

- Drivers must be appropriately dressed - the correct safety gear, including hi-visibility jacket, safety shoes and hard-hats (as appropriate) should be worn.
- Remember loose clothing can become caught on the truck or may interfere with controls.
- Never operate a lift truck with wet hands or shoes.
- Never hold any controls with grease on your hands - your hands and feet could slide off the controls and cause an accident.

## 3. Inspecting Equipment

- To maintain forklift safety, forklift trucks should be thoroughly inspected before starting work, and the shift supervisor should be informed if any problems are identified.
- Daily checks should all be completed before starting off - Follow the instructions in the operator manual.
- Do not operate a lift truck which requires repair - repairs and maintenance should only be carried out by properly qualified individuals (such as a dealer service engineer).

## 4. Starting Off

- Use the steps and hand grabs provided to get onto the truck.
- Ensure that a comfortable operating position is found before starting off and all controls are within easy reach - Armrest and seat position should be correctly adjusted as well as mirrors.
- Ensure that the safety belt is fastened before starting off.
- Do not operate a lift truck unless you are in the operator's seat. Keep arms, legs and head inside the confines of the truck at all times.

## 5. Observe the Operating Environment

- Follow all the work site rules, regulations and restrictions - Only operate forklift trucks in designated roadways.
- Operate the forklift safely, observing all warning signs.

- An operator must be in full control of the truck at all times - Always look in the direction of travel and be fully aware of what is going on around.

## **6. Keep your Speed Down**

- Always operate the forklift within the speed limit.
- Travel slowly when turning - The combination of speed and the sharpness of a turn can cause a tip over.
- Do not stop, start, turn or change direction suddenly.

## **7. Avoid Hazards**

- Avoid bumps, holes, loose materials and use caution when the floor is slippery.
- Do not drive over objects such as pieces of wood scattered on the ground - Doing this could cause the load to move or you could lose control.
- Slow the truck and use the horn close to corners, exits, entrances, stairways, doors, pedestrian walkways and near people.

## **8. Keep your Distance**

- Do not operate your truck close to another truck.
- Keep a safe distance from other trucks in case they move in an unpredictable manner.
- Make sure that you always have enough space to stop safely.

## **9. Load Stability**

- Handle loads carefully and check them closely for stability and balance - Remember, falling loads can cause injury and damage.
- Travel with the load tilted back and the forks as low as possible - This will increase the stability of the truck.
- Do not travel with the forks raised high above the floor, and never travel or turn with the forks in an elevated position or tilted forward.
- Look out for overhead obstructions when lifting or stacking loads.
- Be alert to falling loads when stacking.

## **10. Clear Visibility**

- Carrying a load low to the floor allows good forward visibility; however do not drive in a forward direction when the load restricts your visibility.
- Operate your truck in reverse to improve visibility, except when moving up ramps.
- When stacking, ensure that you have a good view of the rack or top of stack where the load should be positioned.
- Drive carefully when reversing - Before moving off, tilt the forks back completely and confirm that the load is safe.
- If visibility remains obstructed, always stop, and confirm it is safe to proceed. In such circumstances, a lookout or helper may be required.

## **11. Trucks are for Carrying Loads only**

- Lift trucks are designed to carry loads, not people - Do not let other people ride on the truck, unless a second seat is fitted.
- Do not use the forklift truck to lift people, unless there is no practical alternative.
- If a person has to be lifted, use only a securely attached work platform and cage and follow the appropriate operating instructions.

## **12. Keep Clear of the Mast**

- Do not permit anyone to stand or walk under the load or lifting mechanism - The load can fall and cause injury or death to anyone standing below.
- Do not place your hands or feet on the cross members of the mast - Serious injury will be caused if the mast is lowered while your hand is on it.

## **13. Driving on Ramps**

- Remember to drive up ramps in a forward direction and down ramps in reverse, especially while carrying loads.
- Do not load or unload goods or turn while on a ramp.

## **14. Ensure Load is Secure**

- Do not lift or move loads that are not safe or stable.
- Make sure loads are correctly stacked and positioned across both forks.
- Stack the load on the pallet or skid safely and correctly.
- Use securing measures such as ropes or bindings if required.
- Operate slowly when moving long, high, or wide loads.
- Look out for other people or obstructions in your path of travel.

## **15. Ensure Truck is not Over-loaded**

- Do not use the tip of the forks as a lever to raise a heavy load.
- Do not push a load with the tip of the forks, and do not use the tilt cylinder to pull a load.
- Do not overload the truck or add extra counterweight to the truck.
- Know the capacity of your truck and any attachments being used and never exceed this capacity.
- An overload can cause the rear tyres to be raised off the ground and may cause the truck to tip over and cause injury to personnel and damage to the truck or goods.

## **16. Ensure the Load is evenly Distributed**

- Do not lift or move a load unless both forks are fully under the load.
- Do not lift a load with one fork. Use pallets and skids that can withstand the weight of the load.
- Do not use damaged, deformed or decayed pallets and skids.

## **17. Take Special Care with Special Loads**

- Take care when carrying a rounded, tall, long or wide load, making sure that the load is balanced and well secured.
- Turn and work slowly to prevent the load from moving.
- Ask someone to help when space to manoeuvre is restricted. Make sure you follow the signals given by your helper.

## **18. Observe Changes in Operating Environment**

- Observe all signs, especially those on maximum permitted floor loadings and clearance heights, which may vary across the work site.
- Be aware of the height of the load, mast and overhead guard of the forklift when entering or exiting buildings.
- Be careful when operating a truck near the edge of a loading dock or ramp - the truck can fall over the edge and cause injury - keep a safe distance from the edge.
- Do not operate on bridge plates, unless they can support the weight of the truck and load.

## **19. Refuelling**

- Forklift trucks should only be refuelled at specially designated locations.
- Switch off the truck.
- For IC engine trucks, no open flame or sparks are permitted, and refuelling should take place in a well ventilated area.

## **20. When the Shift Ends**

- Park your truck in a designated or authorised area.
- Fully lower the forks to the floor and apply the park brake.
- Turn the truck "off" and remove the key.